



National Park Service
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Apostle Islands
National Lakeshore

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APOSTLE ISLANDS NATIONAL LAKESHORE RECOVERS TWELVE YEARS OF LOST HISTORY

When Jackie and Joseph Brant walked into Apostle Islands National Lakeshore's Bayfield visitor center in early September, they carried 12 years of lost history with them. They made the trip from their home in Potosi, Wisconsin to donate a "treasure" that Jackie's father had rescued during a hunting trip to Michigan Island in 1956.

Robert Muller made regular trips to the Apostle Islands to hunt deer in the 1950s. He and his friends arranged for commercial fisherman Morris Boutin to take them to deer camps on either Stockton Island or Michigan Island. On a trip to Michigan Island in 1956, Robert found a copy of the lighthouse keeper's log book in one of the buildings at the light station. The light had been automated in 1943 and the buildings were unoccupied and in disrepair. Robert did not want the log book left to "the wind, rain, snow, and critters so he rescued it." According to Jackie, it was her father's dream to "one day return this piece of history to Michigan Island where it would remain safe for all to enjoy." Unfortunately, Robert died in 1972 before his dream could be realized.

When Jackie's mother died in 1992, the "Jewel of the Lighthouse" was passed to her along with the charge to someday return the log book to the islands. When she read an article this summer about the restoration of the Michigan Island lighthouse, she was reminded of the log book and the decades old promise that she had made.

Jackie walked in the visitor center on September 13 carrying a package wrapped in plain white paper that she presented to park staff. The package was opened to reveal the log book in excellent condition. Its inside cover carried the inscription "Michigan Island Lt. Station Lake Superior May 28, 1914...Edward J. Lane, Keeper...filled out November 22, 1926...Edward J. Lane Keeper."

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The log book was a revelation for park staff. Although the Michigan Island Light was in continuous operation from 1869 to 1943, the only known log book from the light just covered the years 1926 to 1936. Edward Lane was the head lighthouse keeper on Michigan Island from 1902 to 1939. Most of the log entries in the newly discovered book are in his distinctive cursive handwriting style. The log book provides fascinating details about life and work at Michigan Island lighthouse nearly a century ago.

Park staff is planning a series of exhibits for the old Michigan Island Lighthouse once restoration is completed in 2014. The “treasure” that Robert Muller rescued more than 50 years ago will help tell the story of the lighthouse for all visitors to appreciate and enjoy.